

Kansans Encouraged to Compost And Help Save the Environment

PBS Program Feb. 12 Demonstrates Process

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) wants to remind Kansans that February is an ideal time to turn extra lawn trimmings, leaves, and kitchen scraps into compost that can be used as a natural fertilizer for your house plants, gardens, or flower beds this spring, summer, and fall.

Compost can be made by mixing one-part dry leaves with one-part grass clippings or kitchen leftovers and a small amount of water. Manure can also be added to the mix. Compost is made when fungi and bacteria in the compost digest yard and kitchen waste. The compost pile should be kept moist and stirred or turned on a regular basis. Compost will be ready to use within 4-6 months, depending on how well the compost pile has been maintained. Compost is ready to use when it has a rich, earthy smell and the original ingredients are indistinguishable.

“Composting is not only a great way to make your own high-quality fertilizer, it helps save our environment by keeping reusable yard and kitchen waste out of landfills,” said Bill Bider, KDHE director of waste management. “During some months, 20-30 percent of the waste deposited in landfills is waste that could be reused and recycled.”

Some benefits of using compost include:

- Increases soil softness when added to the lawn.
- Balances clay and sand soils.
- Prevents wind and water erosion when added as a top layer to the lawn or garden.
- Eliminates the need for chemical fertilizers.

“Composting saves money and it saves the environment. It is just one more thing Kansans can do to reduce, recycle, and reuse waste,” said Bider.

PBS will air a segment on composting in an episode of “Ask This Old House” on Saturday, Feb. 12, at 10:30 a.m. In this episode, landscape contractor Roger Cook will demonstrate for host Steve Thomas how to collect and compost leaves.

For more information on composting, visit www.kansasdontspoilit.com, www.compostingcouncil.org, or your local extension office. Later this spring, Kansans are encouraged to celebrate International Compost Awareness Week, May 1-7.